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ber of the privy council. After this he visited Scotland.—He was solicited to stand candidate for the borough of Newry, but after six days' polling he gave it up, finding that General Needham, the opposing candidate, was more popular. In 1813 his health began to decline, and while in London, in the April of that year, he suffered severely from an attack of inflammation in his chest, but in a little time so far recovered as to resume his judicial duties. In 1814, his health still declining, he resigned his judicial station, and then visited England and France. The short remainder of his life was passed between Dublin and London. On the day of his last departure for England, after having parted in the ordinary way from one of his friends, he suddenly turned back and grasped his hands, saying in an affectionate but firm tone, "you will never behold me more." Before he arrived at Cheltenham he was attacked with paralytic symptoms—he arrived in London in September, intending to visit France or Italy. On the 7th of October a swelling appeared over one of his eyes, to which, thinking it proceeded from cold, he gave little attention. On the night of the 8th, he was attacked with apoplexy. He was attended by Drs. Bradham and Ainslie, and Mr. Tegart of Pall Mall, all of whom pronounced recovery impossible—all their skilful efforts were in vain. He expired at nine o'clock at night, on the 14th October, 1817, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. During his short illness he appeared free from pain; was speechless from the commencement of the attack, and with the exception of a few intervals, quite insensible. His last moments were so placid, that those who watched him could not ascertain the exact moment of his expiration. Three of his children, his son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and his old and attached friend, Mr. Godwin, (the novelist) surrounded his death bed, and performed the last offices of piety and respect. The funeral did not take place till the fourth of November, and his remains were privately interred in one of the vaults of Paddington Church, London.

W. A.

Curran has left some pieces in poetry and prose behind him. Poetry he only practised in his leisure hours as a relaxation from the toils of the day; nevertheless he produced some effusions not unworthy of the greatest poets of the age. Very few of his poems remain. The following shows how the author could appreciate true domestic happiness:—

#### THE GREEN SPOT THAT BLOOMS O'ER THE DESERT OF LIFE.

A SONG.

O'er the desert of life, where you vainly pursued  
Those phantoms of hope which their promise disown,  
Have you e'er met some spirit divinely endued,  
That so kindly could say, "you don't suffer alone!"  
And however your fate may have smiled or have frowned,  
Will she deign still to share as the friend and the wife?  
Then make her the pulse of your heart; for you've found  
"The green spot that blooms o'er the desert of life."

Does she love to recal the past moments so dear,  
When the sweet pledge of faith was confidently given  
When the lip spoke the voice of affection sincere,  
And the vow was exchanged, and recorded in heaven?  
Does she wish to re-bind what already was bound,  
And draw closer the claim of the friend and the wife?  
Then make her the pulse of your heart; for you've found  
"The green spot that blooms o'er the desert of life."

#### A TRULY BRAVE MAN.

When the American army was at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777, a Captain of the Virginia Line refused a challenge sent him by a brother officer, alleging that his life was devoted to the service of his country, and that he did not think it a point of duty to risk it, to gratify the caprice of any man. His antagonist gave him the character of a coward through the whole army. Conscious of not having merited the aspersion, and discovering the injury he should sustain in the minds of those unacquainted

with him, he repaired one evening to a general meeting of the officers of that line. On his entrance, he was avoided by the company, and the officer who had challenged him insolently ordered him to leave the room—a request which was loudly re-echoed from all parts. He refused, and asserted that he came there to vindicate his fame; and after mentioning the reasons which induced him not to accept the challenge, he applied a large hand grenade to the candle, and when the fuse had caught fire, threw it on the floor, saying, "here gentlemen, this will quickly determine which of us all dare brave dangers most." At first, they stared upon him for a moment with stupid astonishment, but their eyes soon fell upon the fuse of the grenade, which was fast burning down. Away scampered colonel, general, ensign, and captain, and all made a rush at the door simultaneous and confused.—Some fell, and others made way over the bodies of their comrades; some succeeded in getting out, but for the instant there was a general heap of flesh sprawling at the entrance of the apartment. Here was a colonel jostling with a subaltern, and there fat generals pressing lean lieutenants into the boards, and blustering majors and squeaking ensigns wrestling for exit; the size of the one and the feebleness of the other making their chance of departure pretty equal, until time, which does all things, at last cleared the room, and left the noble captain standing over the grenade with his arms folded and his countenance expressing every kind of scorn and contempt for the train of scrambling red-coats, as they toiled and bustled and bored their way out of the door. After the explosion had taken place, some of them ventured to return, to take a peep at the mangled remains of their comrade, whom, however, they found alive and uninjured.—When they were all gone, the captain threw himself flat on the floor as the only possible means of escape, and fortunately came off with a whole skin and repaired reputation.

#### ASTRONOMY—THEORY OF THE EARTH.

Professor Brande, in his excellent "Manual of Chemistry," notices the amusing theory of the earth as given by Buffon in his *Historie et Theorie de la Terre et des Epogues de la Nature*. He says it merits attention not on account of its accordance with present appearances, or as affording plausible solutions of observed phenomena, but from the eloquence with which it is adorned, the extent of the information it displays, and the popularity derived from these sources.

He supposes the planets in general to have been struck off from the sun by a comet; that they consisted of fluid matter, and thence assumed a spherical form; and that by the union of centrifugal and centripetal forces they are restrained in their present orbits. The earth gradually cooled, and the circumambient vapours condensed upon its surface, while sulphurous, saline, and other matters, penetrated its cracks and fissures, and formed veins of metallic and mineral products. The scorified or pumaceous surface of the earth, acted upon by water, produced clay, mud, and loose soils, and the atmosphere was constituted of subtle effluvia, floating above all the more ponderous materials. The sun, and winds, and tides, and the earth's motion, and other causes, became effective in producing new changes. The waters were much elevated in the equatorial regions: and mud, gravel, and fragments were transported thither from the pole: hence, says the speculator, the highest mountains lie between the tropics, the lowest towards the poles; and hence the infinity of islands which stud the tropical seas. The globe's surface, once even and regular, became now rough and irregular; excavations were formed in one part, and land was elevated in another; and during a period of ages, the fragments of the original materials, the shells of various fish, and different other exuviae, were ground up by the ocean, and produced calcareous strata, and other low-land depositions.

This, certainly, is doing business with a flourish of trumpets, and would seem to exhibit rather the poetic splendour of philosophy, than its dry details and deeply hidden truth,